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# Northwoods Journal

August 2005

*Enjoying and Protecting Marinette County's Outdoor Life*

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## *Destination.... Marinette County* **Quiet Water Paddling Trips**

*Chuck Druckrey, Water Resource Specialist*  
Marinette County is home to some of the best whitewater rivers in the nation. To those who participate in this adrenaline pumping sport, Roaring Rapids on the Peshtigo River and Piers Gorge on the Menominee are familiar names. However, for those of us who prefer our rivers a little more sedate, Marinette County has more than 130 miles of quiet water canoe routes with unmatched scenic beauty and plenty of public access.

**The Peshtigo River** – Despite its reputation as a world-class whitewater destination, it has some of the best quiet water in the state. Drop a canoe or kayak in below the Sandstone Dam near Crivitz and you can float more than 50 miles to the Bay and only have to portage around two dams. For the entire 50 miles, the Peshtigo is a moderately large river with adequate flow to float a canoe even in the driest years. If you have seen any of our local rivers you know that this is one of those years! Even now, the river can be floated but the current will be slow and you may have to get out and pull over shallow areas a few times.

The first public access on this section of river is at the end of Sandstone Lane off County W two miles west of Crivitz. The river starts with a short section of fast water and waves that is easily navigated and rates as a Class I rapids. For the next 4 miles, the river slows as it winds its way towards Crivitz. Most of the land on the south bank has recently been subdivided and the number of homes is increasing yearly. The next take out is at Brooks Memorial Park in Crivitz where County W crosses the river. Another 4 miles will take you through largely undeveloped floodplain to the Highway 141 access. A good landing with adequate parking is located on the upstream side of the bridge on river-right. (River-right and river-left are always from the boater's perspective facing down stream.)

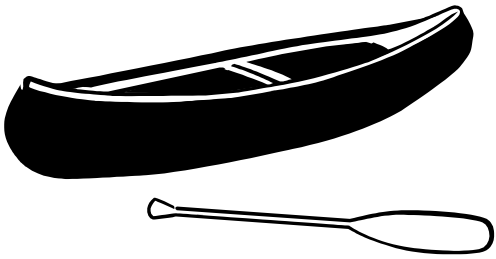
Between Highway 141 and Bagley Flowage, the river winds 24 miles through largely undeveloped floodplains with several small subdivisions along the way. Downed trees are common along the river, but they almost never block the entire channel and can be avoided. There is a very short Class I rapids located about 4 miles upstream from County P that can usually heard as you approach. This section of river can be broken into several smaller float trips by utilizing the access points at County P (10.4 miles, take out upstream river-right), County W (4.2 miles, downstream-left), Bridge Road (3.1 miles, downstream-right), County E (3 miles) and

Bagley Road (2.5 miles river-right). However, the County E Bridge is not recommended as a take out due to steep banks and large rip-rap.

At the Bagley Road access, the river is already very slow and sluggish as you encounter the impounded waters of Bagley Flowage. The flowage is 2 miles long and lies in the newly created Peshtigo River State Forest. It is quite narrow with lots of braided channels, islands and hundreds of acres of wild rice. You may encounter some powerboats here but they are primarily smaller fishing craft. There is a marked portage around the Potato Rapids Dam on the left side of the powerhouse. To put in below the dam, use the public landing west of the Highway 64 Bridge. From here, it is 3.7 miles to the City of Peshtigo landing at Badger Park. Again, the river is slow with numerous braided channels and small swampy islands and you soon encounter the backwater from Peshtigo Flowage. The riverbanks are more developed here, and during summer you may want to avoid weekends since power boating, water skiing and personal watercraft are common, even in the narrow channels. There is a marked portage around the Peshtigo Dam in the City of Peshtigo but you have to cross Highway 41 so it is seldom used.

From the Peshtigo Dam, it is 11 miles to the mouth at the Bay of Green Bay. Here the river has been developed as an interpretive "river trail." You can pick up a map and interpretive brochure for the self-guided tour at the Peshtigo East Side Boat Landing located behind the Peshtigo city garage on East Front Street. Along the river trail, you will wind through almost 6000 acres of state owned land. There are areas with high sandy banks and several sandbars that invite streamside picnics and swimming. As you approach Green Bay, the river flows through one of the last undisturbed estuaries on the Great Leaks. Unlike most major rivers, there is no harbor or industrial district and no sea walls to control the river. Here you will learn about the long-lost town and sawmills of Peshtigo Harbor. The last take-outs are at the Klingsporn Landing located off of Highway BB on the river-left about 1 mile from the mouth, or the landing at the mouth (on river-right) which is located at the end of Harbor Road. To reach Harbor Road, take West Front Street out of Peshtigo and turn left 1.1 miles after you cross the tracks.

**The Menominee River** – It forms the border between Wisconsin and Michigan in Marinette  
*See Paddling, page 2*



### Rapids Rankings

Rivers are ranked on an international scale of difficulty. Lowest on the scale is riffles, which have fast water, small waves and no obstructions. Next is a Class I rapid, characterized by fast moving water with small waves and few obstructions that can be easily avoided. Class III rapids are generally considered the limit for open boats with expert paddlers. The highest rating is Class VI. These rapids are extremely difficult and very dangerous. Remember that most rapids become more difficult in high flows.

### Canoe Trail Maps

Menominee River Canoe Trail maps are available through Northwoods Wilderness Outfitters in Iron Mountain, Michigan. They include the Menominee, Brule, Michigamme and Paint Rivers. You can order them on the web at [www.northwoodsoutfitters.com](http://www.northwoodsoutfitters.com) or call 1-800-530-8859. A river trail guide for the Peshtigo River Canoe Trail on the Lower Peshtigo is available at the East Side Boat landing in Peshtigo, the Marinette Chamber of Commerce, and the Marinette County Courthouse. Also invaluable is a Marinette County Highway Map listing almost all roads, paved, dirt, or otherwise. You can also get this from the Chamber or the Courthouse.

## Who You Gonna Call?

*Spotlighting natural resource and conservation professionals working in Marinette County so you know who to call with questions or concerns.*



**Chuck Druckrey**

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### What things do you do as part of your job?

Basically any water quality issues on Marinette County lakes and streams. A lot of my time is spent working with landowners concerned about water quality to identify runoff pollution sources and manage them. I also work a lot with landowners who have questions about private ponds and those who want to improve shoreline and wetland habitat on their property.

## Northwoods Journal

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*Northwoods Journal* focuses on various outdoor recreation opportunities and local environmental topics to inform readers about natural resource use, management, and recreation in Marinette County.

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[www.marinettecounty.com/lw\\_home.htm](http://www.marinettecounty.com/lw_home.htm)

**You know a lot about the lakes in Marinette County and the various plant and animal species that live in them. What is unique about Marinette County's lakes compared to other parts of Wisconsin?**

Marinette County has an abundance of small shallow lakes. Many of them are naturally nutrient rich and support lots of aquatic plants. People mistakenly try to judge them against large lakes but they are not comparable. From water quality to plants to fish communities, small lakes behave differently.

**What recommendations do you have for shoreland property owners that might be thinking about restoring or enhancing native vegetation on their property?**

Take a look around your lake and see what is growing in undisturbed areas similar to your own lot. If you work with the lake, you will

spend a lot less time managing the vegetation. I would also remind people that natural habitat isn't a neat and orderly landscape with plants grouped together and neatly trimmed. Natural habitat is kind of "messy."

**What's your favorite lake activity, and why?**

My favorite lake activity is canoeing. I especially like canoeing rivers because there is always something new around the next bend.

### "Chuck's Message"

If you have questions or concerns about your favorite lake or stream, give me a call. There are several state grant programs available to assist landowners in studying water quality and managing lakes and streams. Our department has been very successful in securing these funds for local lake groups.



### ***Paddling, from page 1***

County, and differs from the Peshtigo in several significant ways. Most importantly, it is a much larger river. Starting where the quiet water section begins near Niagara, the Menominee typically carries 3 times more water than the Peshtigo. It is also wider and meanders less than the Peshtigo. This means that wind, which always seems to blow upstream, can be an issue and slow your progress considerably. The Menominee also has much more public land available which lends itself well to overnight trips with riverside camping.

For the first 30 miles below Highway 8, the States of Wisconsin, Michigan and WE Energies own most of the shoreline. Here the river flows past majestic pine forests, numerous islands, and rock outcrops. Wildlife is abundant and power boaters are rare outside of the flowages. This section of river has been developed as a canoe route with several developed and primitive campsites available to the river traveler. The quiet water section begins at the Highway 8 Bridge where access with parking is provided. From here, it is only 3.8 miles of mostly still water to Sturgeon Dam. To avoid Sturgeon Falls Flowage and its powerboats, you can start below the Sturgeon Falls Dam on the Michigan side of the river.

Between Sturgeon Falls Dam and Pemene Falls, are 15 miles of wild undeveloped river. Midway through the trip you will encounter Quiver Falls, Class II-III rapid where you can take out or portage on the right side of the river. As you approach the rapids, you can see the remnants of a large wooden dam and diverting structures from the river's log driving days. You will also hear the roar of the rapids. From here, it is 5.5 miles to Pemene Falls, a Class V falls that must be portaged. As you approach, the river narrows greatly as it flows between two granite outcrops and you will hear the roar of the falls. Pull over on the Michigan side (river-left) to portage.

Below Pemene falls, it is 9 miles to the Chalk Hills dam. On the way, you will canoe past the historic Miscauno Island before entering Chalk Hills Flowage. This flowage is bounded by steep hills and has numerous small islands. The dam has an easy marked portage on the Wisconsin shore. After Chalk Hills, you enter the White Rapids Flowage almost immediately. More campsites and some very large islands can be found here. The portage is again on the Wisconsin shore.

The 50 miles of river between White Rapids and the City of Marinette is a mixture of private, public and utility owned land. Development gets more common as you approach Marinette but there

is still a lot of scenic quality to the river. Here camping is limited to a campground on the Michigan side about 9 miles down from White Rapids Dam and a canoe campsite at Menominee River County Park almost 25 miles further downstream where County X meets Highway 180 in Wisconsin. Public landings on this part of the river are common and well spaced. Using only the Wisconsin landings the river can be divided into at least 8 segments with none longer than 9 river miles. Many of the access points on the Menominee are along Highway 180 where it parallels the river. Others are out of the way on town or forest roads and more difficult to find. For these, a good county map and/or Wisconsin Gazetteer are useful. Please note that access points on Grogan Road and River Road, both off Pike River Road in the town of Wausaukee do not show on most maps.

So, lower that canoe from the garage rafters and get out there. While it may be fun to paddle around the lake, its much more interesting to travel on a river where the view is always changing and the motorboats are few and far between. While you're at it, bring along a pole and you will see that besides great scenery and good swimming our rivers offer some fantastic fishing.

### **Basic River Safety Tips**

- Remember that even calm rivers can become dangerous during high flows. Nobody should attempt canoeing during floods. The dangers are even greater when the water and air are cold.
- Stay away from strainers. These are trees that hang low over, or on, the water and act like a strainer as the water flows through and under them. Typically found on the outside of bends, the current can sweep a boat and its occupants into the branches. Avoid strainers by staying on the inside as you round bends. They are most dangerous during high flows.
- Dams, even small ones should be avoided. Use the designated and marked portage routes. The most dangerous place near dams is the turbulent water below them. Put in below a dam at the designated site and do not paddle upstream into the turbulent outflow.
- Remember your basic boat safety. Wear a life jacket and let people know where you are going and when you will be back. Also, take along an extra paddle, some water and sunscreen, and be prepared to deal with bugs in certain seasons.





## HARMONY ARBORETUM PRAIRIE WALK

Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup>  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Prairies once covered two million acres of Wisconsin. As Europeans settled in Wisconsin, they converted the treeless prairies into crop fields and learned to control the sweep of wildfires. Fire keeps forest plants from taking over and allows the soil to warm up quickly, making the prairie plants grow back faster. Without it, invading trees and shrubs gradually turn grasslands into woodlands. Today, less than 12,000 scattered acres of prairie exist in Wisconsin. As grasslands are lost, so are the animals that live there. In order to protect and maintain the biodiversity of prairie ecosystems, special restoration projects and plantings like the one at Harmony Arboretum can give grasslands a second chance.

During the program, county staff will talk about the restored prairie. You can learn exactly what a prairie is, why and how people restore prairies today, and how to identify different kinds of prairie plants. Come and take in some of nature's beauty. This is a free program.

Harmony Arboretum is located seven miles west of Marinette on Hwy 64 and half a mile south on County Hwy E.



## "Common Ground" Exhibit On Display

Those interested in the beauty, complexity and fragility of the environment in Northeast Wisconsin will want to view the "Common Ground" art exhibit on display at the Stephenson Public Library, Marinette, the Spies Public Library, Menominee, and the UW-Marinette art gallery now until September 28.

On loan from the Francis Hardy Center for the Arts in Ephraim, Wisconsin, the exhibit combines art, science and poetry to explore environmental issues of importance to all. Each location highlights a specific area of the environment. The Stephenson Public Library exhibit is entitled "Fisheries: Endangered and Invaded." The Spies Public Library exhibit focuses on "Vanishing Points: Forests and Natural Resources." Artworks at the UW-Marinette gallery are built around "Reflections: Water and Sky," to explore water issues and light pollution in the night sky. Local artists whose works have been juried into the show include Johanna Axelrod, Lauri Beldo, Jan Ross Deetjen, Pete Entringer, Michael Goes, Jody LaCanne, Jim Malfa, Jan Larson, Ernie Pleger, and Kathryn Wedge.

The exhibit is also the focal point for UW-Marinette's Fall Convocation scheduled for September 28 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the campus located at it's Bay Shore site. Open to the public, Wisconsin State Poet Laureate Denise Sweet will give the keynote address at 11 am. At 1:00, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, workshops will be given by artists

## White-throated Sparrow

In June, we discussed the ovenbird, a warbler, and explained what Neotropical migrant songbirds are. In July, we took a look at the red-eyed vireo. This month the white-throated sparrow gets the spotlight. If you have spent time along Marinette County's streams in spring and summer you surely heard the white-throated sparrows distinctive call, a slow series of clear whistles described as "*Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody.*" For some reason, north of the border they interpret the call as Oh Sweet Canada. The 7-inch white-throated sparrow gets its name from the bright white patch under its chin. Other field marks include patches of yellow in front of its eyes and black and white stripes on its head. Unlike many of our migratory birds, the males and females differ mainly in size rather than plumage. About twelve sparrow species breed in Marinette County. In general, the drab brown plumage and secretive behavior of sparrows makes them easier to identify by sound than sight.

The white-throated sparrow is considered a short distance migrant unlike most warblers and vireos, which winter in Central and South America. They breed from southeastern Yukon across Canada to Newfoundland and southward to the northeastern United States. The southwest edge of their summer ranges cuts diagonally across Wisconsin. White-throated sparrows winter across the southern United States. Interestingly their breeding grounds differ greatly from the wintering grounds. In summer, they epitomize remote coniferous and mixed forest, their song an anthem for unspoiled wildness. But in winter, the birds are found in wood lots, fencerows, weedy fields, parks and urban backyards. Also like many migratory songbirds, they no longer live solitary lives defending a territory. They spend most of their day feeding in loose flocks.

White-throated sparrows are among the first migrants to arrive in spring and the last to leave in fall. This is possible because they can choose from a wide variety of food sources. These include weed seeds, fruits from trees and shrubs, insects such as ants, flies, and beetles, or even tree buds. Most other migrant songbirds are more dependent upon insects for food. Since they feed mostly on the ground, all the white-throated sparrow needs is an exposed forest floor.

Like most migrating songbirds they migrate by night and forage by day. Upon arrival at the breeding grounds in the spring, males and females seek each other out, with one interesting quirk. Although males and females look alike, the color of their middle head stripe varies from bird to bird. It comes in two different colors - white and tan. Amazingly, sparrows with the white stripe prefer mates with a tan stripe. Living proof that opposites attract.

After choosing a mate, the female selects the nest site and builds a cup-shaped nest of coarse grass, twigs, rootlets, and lines it with finer materials such as moss or deer hair. It is located on or close to the ground (rarely as high as 3') in a grass hummock, brush pile, under a horizontal tree branch, or mat of dead bracken fern. Three to six greenish white, heavily brown spotted eggs are incubated for 11 -14 days. Born naked, blind, and helpless, the birds are afraid of humans and fully imprinted on their parents in five days. Nine to twelve days after hatching, the young leave the nest to scatter around the nest area. A few days after that, the young can fly. The parents continue to feed them for some time after they leave the nest. Although white-throated sparrows will attempt to re-nest if theirs is destroyed, normally they only have time for one brood per year.

One of the best ways to get a better look at white-throated sparrows, and many other migrant songbirds, is through a vocal technique known as "pishing." Rapidly repeat the high-pitched "*pish, pish, pish*" of a young bird calling for help. Although many species will respond to this call during the breeding season, sparrows seem particularly susceptible. If you don't know the songs, pishing is a good way to bring the birds close enough to identify them by sight.

Although, the white-throated sparrow is an abundant breeding bird in much of its range, it seems to be declining in most areas. The North American Breeding Bird Survey shows 0.6 percent overall annual declines each year since it began in 1966. Research suggests this is mostly because of loss of under story vegetation due to aging of the forest and over browsing, aerial spraying of forest pesticides, and changes in forest management.



and scientists connected with the Common Ground exhibit. A Menominee Nation Pow Wow will be held at 7:00 pm at the UW-Marinette Field House.

The Common Ground traveling exhibit is made possible with funding from the Lyn and Roger Derusha Family, Nicolet Bank, the

Fairfield Center for Contemporary Art, and the UW Colleges. The original project was funded by grants from the Peninsula Arts Association, the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, and the Lakeshore Natural Resources Partnership, Inc. Submitted by Maureen Molle, UW-Marinette

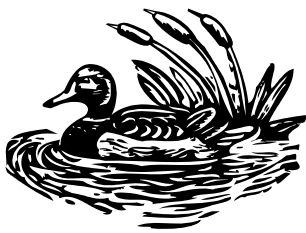


## Birding Bulletin

By Greg "The Egg" Cleereman, County Conservationist

## RESTORING OUR WETLANDS

Chuck Druckrey, Water Resource Specialist



Very few types of land are more misunderstood, maligned and abused than the wetland. Throughout most of our history, wetlands were regarded as wastelands, a refuge for nuisance insects and a source of disease. Too wet to farm but too dry to fish, they were targeted by federal and state agencies whose main purpose was to drain, fill, flood or otherwise convert every wetland to some beneficial use. And as a nation, we were good at it! In Wisconsin alone, more than half of our original 10 million acres of wetlands have been destroyed, and many of those that remain have been severely damaged by our abuse. Fortunately, attitudes change and people increasingly see the value in protecting wetlands. Values that include such things as flood control, shoreline protection, water quality improvement and habitat for thousands of species plants and animals.

Today, instead of filling and draining wetlands, these same state and federal agencies as well as many private conservation groups are pushing back, protecting our remaining wetlands and restoring those that have been destroyed or otherwise abused.

By definition, if you restore a wetland you return it to its original condition with water levels and vegetation similar to what it had before it was disturbed or destroyed. Other options that are often lumped together with restoration include wetland enhancement and wetland creation. Enhancement, or improvement, usually involves flooding or excavating existing wetlands to change the amount and depth of open water present. Wetland creation is making a wetland where one never existed.

When restoring wetlands, the key is reestablishing the original hydrology. Hydrology is a fancy word that describes water levels, where the water comes from, where it goes and how long it stays on site. If you can restore the hydrology of a site, you are 90% finished. All that's left is to add wetland plants. Fortunately, most wetland seeds can lie dormant in wetland soils for generations. If the original wetland soil is still present, the seeds will often sprout and grow as soon as the hydrology is restored. In some cases however, exotic species such as reed canary grass, giant reed or purple loosestrife will invade and need to be managed. You can avoid problems with exotic species by working with a professional when attempting your wetland restoration.

So how does one go about restoring a wetland? The first step is determining how the wetland was disturbed in the first place. The most common disturbance was the building of ditches and installation of drain tiles to remove water from the wetland so it could be farmed. Restoring the hydrology is often as simple as filling the ditch and/or disabling the drain tile. For filled wetlands, the solution is to remove the fill to expose the wetland soil beneath. In either case drainage patterns need to be restored to bring water to your wetland.

Wetland enhancement usually involves excavating shallow areas in an existing wetland, building a dike or low berm to impound water, or using both practices in combination. The end result is typically the conversion of a degraded wetland into a shallow or deep-water marsh with greatly increased wildlife habitat value. This practice should be limited to severely degraded wetlands that are dominated by exotic species. Digging ponds or flooding an existing undisturbed wetland is seldom a good idea since you are simply enhancing some wetland functions at the expense of others. Often these well meaning wetland "improvements" actually cause a lot of damage to otherwise perfectly healthy wetlands. Where exotic species have taken over a wetland, enhancement often involves years of special vegetation management practices to give native wetland plants a chance. These practices typically involve some combination of mowing, flooding, burning and herbicide treatment.

Wetland creation is a practice that is mainly used by the Department of Transportation and other agencies to replace wetlands filled during road building or other development. While this seems like a good idea, it appears that we cannot easily duplicate what formed naturally over thousands of years. In fact, attempts to create wetlands have been so unsuccessful that wetland creation has been largely abandoned in favor of restoration.

If all of this sounds easy, don't be fooled. Restoring or enhancing a wetland can be a complicated project; particularly where ditches or drain tiles will be disabled. Often great care must be taken to restore the sites hydrology without flooding neighboring properties or otherwise disrupting drainage patterns. In any restoration, care must also be taken to control invasive species that might invade your site. Luckily, numerous government and private conservation organizations can evaluate your site and assist with wetland restoration design. Many also offer cost-share assistance or other incentives for restoration.

So where does someone interested in restoring a wetland begin? In Marinette County a good place to start is with the county Land & Water Conservation Division at 715-732-7780. Conservation staff can help you evaluate the area for restoration potential and may be able to provide technical and financial assistance. If we can't help we can probably refer you to someone who can. And, of course, no mention of wetland restoration would be complete without discussing permits. You can assume that for almost any wetland restoration activity A PERMIT WILL BE REQUIRED! Again, county staff may be able to offer assistance in navigating the permit process, or you can start by calling the Department of Natural Resources in Peshtigo at 715-582-5000.

### WETLAND RESTORATION HANDBOOK

Originally published in 2000, the Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) published an updated version of the *Wetland Restoration Handbook* in 2004. This award-winning book is a comprehensive guide for landowners interested in restoring, improving and protecting wetlands. It can be ordered through the Wisconsin Wetlands Association by calling 608-250-9971 or visiting them on-line at [www.wiscwetlands.org](http://www.wiscwetlands.org). If you are interested in wetland restoration, this will be the best \$5.00 you ever spent. At the WWA website you can also find links to the DNR webpage where the handbook can be viewed on-line.

## Nature's Almanac

### August 2

By August, we expect the birds' breeding season to be completed and the fall migration to be beginning.

August is not the time to look for active nesting, but goldfinches surprise us; they begin building nests when other birds are done.

While most birds are busy with nesting and raising young, goldfinches feed and fly over fields with the care-free spirit of singles. Their late nesting coincides with the maturity of bull and Canada thistle flowers. Thistles bloom in midsummer and after pollination form the fluffy material called down. Down is produced to disperse seeds by wind, but it is used by goldfinches as a lining for their nests. Down is so essential that the birds do not nest until it is available in late summer. Then they produce four to six eggs.

Late nesting does present some problems, but the down helps the young deal with the chill of late summer. Fortunately, goldfinches are late migrant and do not travel far to their winter home. They seem to be in no hurry to leave, and some even winter in the northland.

### August 18

August is still summer and often quite warm, but because of the later sunrises and earlier sunsets, some birds are migrating. One of the early travelers, the sharp-shinned hawk, begins its long migration period now but continues into the fall.

The sharp-shinned hawk is a small hawk, only about one foot in length, with short rounded wings and a long tail. Adults sport a gray back, red bars on the underside, and black-and-white bands under the tail. The young are brown with brown stripes on a lighter breast. Only the adults have red eyes. The sharp-shinned hawk gets its name from its long pointed feet. It feeds on small mammals and songbirds in its forest habitat.

Sharp-shinned hawks nest in much of Canada, and now, after nesting, they slowly migrate to wintering grounds in southern United States. Unlike many raptors, they do not migrate in flocks, but appear alone or in pairs as they drift by. Their low flight allows them to find places to feed and rest. For many more weeks these little raptors will pass by as they work their way south.

### August 31

Asters are so common in late summer that, along with the goldenrods, they lay claim to the meadows. Like the goldenrods, asters are a diverse group. Most display a range of white to purple composite flowers that give rise to the name aster, meaning star like.

Most of the asters grow in the meadows and roadsides, but one, the large-leaf (or big-leaf) aster is a resident of mixed forests. Huge heart-shaped leaves that grow near the ground give the plant its name. Growing in groups, the asters appear in spring, and their leaves cover entire regions of the forest floor, but here in the shade only a few put forth a stem and purple flowers. Being perennials, most make food to store for another year. If a fire or other disturbance gives more sunlight to this growth, the asters respond with renewed energy, and many bloom.

Composite flowers of about twenty light purple rays surround the yellow disks, which late will become reddish. Ten to twenty of these one-inch wide flowers branch above the leafy stem. In true aster fashion, plants hang on to the flowers until late fall frosts arrive.

From, "Backyard Almanac," by Larry Weber  
Illustrations by Judy Gibbs





## Proper Watering in your Landscape

Scott Reuss, UW-Extension Ag/Horticulture Agent

As of the writing date of this article, landscapes in Marinette County are officially approaching drought status. All of our landscape plants need water, and this article will outline some of the steps you can take to help all your various plants make it through a dry summer with as few problems as possible.



First, remember that most growing plants need approximately the equivalent of one inch of water per week during the growing season, whether that be from natural rainfall or from irrigation. However, the sandier your soil (something we are blessed/cursed with here), the more likely that you will have to increase that amount, especially if your plants are just getting water from irrigation.

Second, think of how you can increase the water-holding capacity of your soil. Over the long-term, probably the best way to do this is to increase the organic matter content of your soil. Do this by incorporating organic amendments such as leaves (don't use black walnut), straw, lawn clippings, compost, hay, etc.... into your soil whenever you till the soil. Another way to increase the organic matter and to directly slow water evaporation is by using organic mulches. Any mulch can be used to decrease evaporation losses, but organic mulches will also increase the nutrient and water-holding capacity of the soil itself. By increasing the water-holding capacity of your soil, you will increase your plant's health and decrease the amount of supplemental water you need to provide.

Third, when irrigating, remember to water thoroughly and deeply. One or two deep irrigations of one-half inch to one inch of water per week are much better for plant health than watering many times with less water. Also, try to water in the early morning to maximize the ability of the soil to absorb the water and minimize disease potential in your plants. If in doubt about how much water you are actually applying, place coffee cans or the like in various places under your irrigation system and check for both consistency and the amount that you are applying. Another point here is consistency. This is particularly true for lawns. If your lawn grasses have gone dormant, you need to either let them stay dormant or start a consistent watering program. Watering them one week and then not watering again for three weeks is much more harmful than not watering and letting them remain in their dormant state. There is a danger of lawns not coming out of dormancy soon enough to go into winter in good shape, so plan on starting to water if your lawn is dormant for more than about 6 weeks.

Lastly, all of our plants need supplemental water if we get truly dry. It is more obvious that our flowers, lawns, vegetables, and fruits need water, but trees do, as well. In particular, as we go into late fall and winter, you may need to deeply water shrubs and trees to fully hydrate their roots prior to soil freeze. When watering large woody plants, remember that most of their root system is not by the trunk, but out near the drip-line of the tree. Also,

note that it takes a lot of water to successfully water a mature tree. One rule-of-thumb is that large trees need at least 15 gallons of water per inch of diameter, whereas small trees and shrubs need at least 5 gallons per inch of stem diameter.

If you have any horticultural questions or concerns, contact Scott or Linda at the Marinette County UW-Extension office, 715-732-7510 or 1-877-884-4408 or e-mail Scott at [scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu).

## GYPSY MOTH REPORT

On May 25, about 810 acres of Marinette County were successfully sprayed with the biological pesticide Btk. The areas sprayed included parts of the City of Marinette, three County parks, and five private parcels. The acreage sprayed constituted a more than 90% decrease in acreage from 2004.

However, the battle with these pests goes on. Although gypsy moth numbers may at times crash, they are here to stay. The time to spray is before you experience major defoliation of your trees. Keep a vigilant watch for caterpillars in the spring and egg masses in the fall. If you think you may have a problem, contact the Marinette County Land & Water Conservation office and request an application for an egg mass survey for eligibility to participate in the suppression program. The \$20.00

## Northwoods Journal Online

Would you like to read the *Northwoods Journal* on the Web? Each of the four summer issues are posted monthly on the Marinette County website at [www.marinettecounty.com/lw\\_journal\\_home.htm](http://www.marinettecounty.com/lw_journal_home.htm)

We can even send you an E-mail reminder when each new issue is posted, and a direct link to the site. To set it up, contact Amanda at [akostner@marinettecounty.com](mailto:akostner@marinettecounty.com)

nonrefundable application fee must be paid to perform an egg mass survey, which the state requires for entering the program. Spray blocks need to be at least twenty contiguous acres. You must apply for the program and pay the application fee by September 15. If your parcel is smaller than that, you should work with your neighbors to create a viable spray block.

If the egg mass survey indicates you are eligible for the program, you need to pay the spray cost, \$25.00 per acre, by November 15. The Suppression Program will reimburse a portion of spray costs next year.

If you are experiencing problems with gypsy moths or have questions about the program, go to [www.marinettecounty.com/lw\\_ps\\_gm\\_sp.htm](http://www.marinettecounty.com/lw_ps_gm_sp.htm) or contact Land & Water Conservation at 715-732-7780.

## Where in Marinette County?

Tell us where this picture was taken and you could win a prize!



Send us a note including your name, address, and phone or go to [www.marinettecounty.com/lw\\_home.htm](http://www.marinettecounty.com/lw_home.htm) to give us your answer.

Any interesting facts about the subject are also welcome.

**Please respond by August 15, 2005**

Correct answers will be entered into a drawing to win a **birdhouse**.

Margaret Wood of Peshtigo is the winner of a butterfly house for correctly placing this building at the corner of County Roads D and DD in Harmony. She also shared a little piece of history with us. She wrote, *"This building is the former Mac's Tavern in Harmony. It has had other owners since, but the McDonald family ran it for many years. I went to school at the former Harmony one-room school. In the winter (in the 1940's & 50's) there was a small group of men who played cards (smear) on many week day afternoons. Most of them were farmers and in winter they had more spare time. One of these farmers was my father, Terrence Kelly. They played cards for nickels, or rather nickel items such as a glass of beer or a candy bar. Most of them did not drink more than one or two beers during the afternoon so many of them took candy bars. Some of us kids had a steady source of 5-cent candy bars. I remember meeting my dad there many afternoons after school was out for the day. When I appeared he finished the game they were playing and I got a ride home, (usually with candy bars in my hand) better than walking the 2 miles home.*





## Management for Common Reed

The best management strategy is to prevent the introduction of the plant by following the procedures mentioned here. New invasions can be managed by monitoring for new plants before they can expand by rhizomes or stolons. In cases where wetlands have been disturbed, or in recently restored wetlands, preferred wetland plant populations should be re-established as soon as possible to curb the spread of *Phragmites*.

Herbicides can be effective in killing established populations but can also kill other, more desirable, plants in the area. Prescribed burning isn't effective unless root burn occurs, which is rare because the rhizomes are usually covered by a layer of soil. An additional concern is that fires in *Phragmites* stands are dangerous because this species can cause spot-fires over 100 feet away. Cutting can be effective if it is done at the appropriate time (usually just before the end of July); otherwise, cutting can actually increase stand density.

**Before implementing a management program, you should check with your DNR aquatic plant management specialist to find out what permits are needed.** It is important to note that these management techniques can harm native beneficial aquatic plants, so some planning (i.e., development of a plant management strategy) is usually required. It is also important to note that subsequent monitoring of treated areas is required to prevent the re-establishment of the species.

### MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Common reed and how to manage it, or to find out what permits are needed to implement management strategies, contact your DNR aquatic plant specialist. Marinette County residents can contact Greg Sevens, WDNR Watershed Biologist and Aquatic Plant Management Specialist, at 715-582-5013.

You can also visit the Wisconsin Wetland Association's *Phragmites* web page at [www.wiscwetlands.org/phragmites.htm](http://www.wiscwetlands.org/phragmites.htm). This page presents information on *Phragmites* that was contributed by local experts at WWA's January 2005 Wetland Science Forum.

## Invasive Species Profile: Common Reed

By Kendra Axness, UWEX Basin Educator

*Exotic species are plants and animals that spread into an ecosystem beyond their normal range. Exotic species can come from another watershed, state, country, or continent. Invasive species are plants and animals that, once established, take over an ecosystem because they are able to out-compete other species for habitat. Both native and exotic species can become invasive if the conditions are favorable for them.*

### What is common reed?

Common reed, also called *Phragmites*, is a tall perennial grass that inhabits wet areas like brackish and freshwater marshes, riverbanks, lakeshores, ditches and dredge spoil areas. *Phragmites* is native to the U.S. Its distinguishing characteristics are its height (growing as tall as 12 feet!) and large, purplish or silvery flower clusters (called *inflorescences*).

### Where is it from?

Common reed is found throughout the world, on every continent except Antarctica. Fossil records indicate that the reed has been present on the North American continent for more than 3,000 years. Research suggests that a genetically different, but similar looking, strain of the grass was introduced from Europe and that it is this exotic genotype that is aggressively invading wetlands in the U.S.

### How far has it spread?

Common reed is widely distributed in Wisconsin, although it appears to be most common in the southern part of the state, along the Great Lakes and in and around cities. It quickly colonizes roadside ditches and heavily disturbed sites. During the recent low water levels in Lake Michigan (1999-2004), it dramatically expanded into areas of newly exposed lakebed.

### Why is it a concern?

Common reed spreads rapidly, displacing native plants and forming monocultures in otherwise biologically diverse natural wetlands. It is very difficult to control once established. *Phragmites* marshes generally lack the diverse communities of wetland



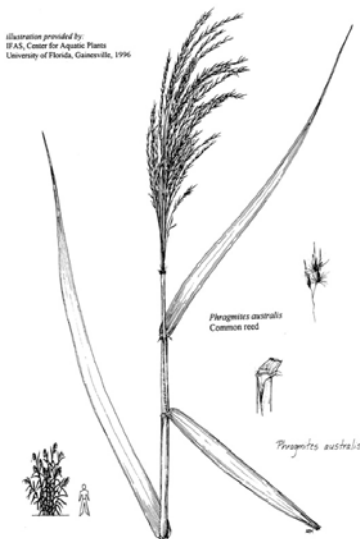
plants and animals that support migratory waterfowl populations. It tolerates a wide range of conditions, surviving in brackish, alkaline and acidic waters.

### How does it spread?

Common reed is sometimes intentionally planted for boat cover and wildlife cover. In some areas, duck hunters have transplanted *Phragmites* as duck blinds. Newly disturbed sites can be colonized by seed or by rhizome fragments carried to the area by humans in soils and on machinery during construction or naturally in floodwaters. Once the grass is established in an area, it will spread by seed or by creeping underground stems called *rhizomes*. Less commonly, during periods of falling water level, they may also send out very fast-growing surface roots (called *stolons*) that can grow up to 50 feet across newly-exposed mud in a single growing season.

### How can I help prevent the spread of common reed?

To prevent the spread of *Phragmites*, do not transplant the grass for any reason. Clean mud from your shoes or boots after visiting an area invaded by this plant to ensure that seeds or rhizomes aren't spread to the next area that you visit.



## How to Identify Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

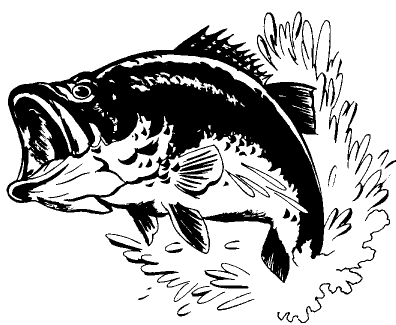
Common reed is a perennial rhizomatous grass, or reed, that is distinguished by its huge stature and its large feathery inflorescence.

- **Stems:** smooth and stiffly upright; up to 12 feet tall and about a half-inch thick
- **Leaves:** flat, elongated, smooth, and stiff with serrated edges; up to 2 ½ inches across and 24 inches long
- **Flowers:** July through September; 3 to 7 flowers on spikelets clustered together to form the large purplish, silvery, or tan inflorescence; spikelets are about ¾ inch long, and the inflorescence can be up to 1¼ feet long.





# FISH TALES



## Fish Management on Small Lakes

*By Chuck Druckrey, Water Resource Specialist*

Many people would be surprised to learn that there are more than 440 lakes and flowages in Marinette County. Most are only familiar with a few of the larger ones such as High Falls, Caldron Falls, or Lake Noquebay. The rest are small lakes, so small that more than 200 of them don't even have an official name. In fact, 90% of the lakes in Marinette County are less than 40 acres in size and almost half are smaller than 5 acres! These lakes provide special challenges when it comes to managing fish.

According to DNR Fisheries Biologist Justine Hasz, one of the greatest challenges is that many anglers and property owners have unrealistic expectations of what the fishery in their favorite small lake should look like. Many look to the larger versions and want their little lake to be a walleye factory or regularly give up trophy bass and limits of 9-inch bluegill. Unfortunately, most small lakes simply can't support walleye. They are not native to our small lakes and introducing them can upset the existing fish population. As for big bass and bluegill, while it may be a realistic goal, most small lakes cannot support large harvests for very long.

The problem with small lakes is that they have simple fish communities with fewer species in a delicate balance of predator and prey. These communities are more easily upset than the fish community in a lake the size of Noquebay or High Falls. Factors that upset the balance can be permanent such as introducing a new species that can reproduce, semi-permanent such as loss of shoreline and shallow water habitat, or temporary such as poor reproduction, winter fish kill or unsustainable angler harvest. Any of these factors can throw the fish community out of balance.

Unfortunately, it's not always easy to figure out what is causing the problem. With many lakes, the problem is one of insufficient habitat. If there are no large bass in a lake, it could be that there is no cover for spawning or a lack of shallow wetland nursery areas for newly hatched fry. Or the bass could be reproducing but they do not have enough to eat and grow slowly or are being removed as fast as they reach the legal size.

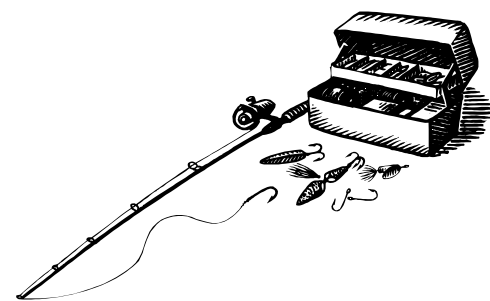
A very common problem in small lakes is an over abundance of small bluegill and few large bass. On lakes with lots of fishing pressure, it may be that the larger bluegill and bass are all being caught. According to Hasz, the fishing pressure on some of our small lakes is incredibly high, particularly in the winter months when the effort is more sustained and panfish are easier to catch. Another common cause is stunting of the bluegill. This occurs when there are too many for the food base so none of them eat enough to reach a quality size. As most anglers know, bluegills are very prolific spawners. If anglers remove too many top predators bluegill can quickly overpopulate a lake. Talk to someone who routinely catches large bluegill and they will tell you a secret is to look for lakes that have good numbers of really big bass. Six-inch bass won't do the job, it's the 16-20 inch bass that do most of the bluegill control.

Sometimes it turns out there isn't a problem with the fish at all, and few or stunted fish is the natural condition of the lake. Research shows that soft water lakes are less productive and typically carry fewer fish per acre than similar hard water lakes. Also, shallow weedy lakes often experience occasional winterkill. These events often don't kill all the fish but they are hardest on the larger fish and some of the top predators. These lakes often contain lots of minnows, stunted perch and sometimes small northern.

Of course, sometimes the problem is at the other end of the pole! Send even the best fisherman out at noon on a bright sunny Saturday in July and the fishing might not be the best. Sometimes fish surveys will show a good fish population with a decent size structure but the fish just aren't being caught or are only "catchable" during certain times of the year. This is common with bluegill in clear lakes where they can be caught off the spawning beds but seem to disappear for the rest of the season.

So how do you determine the true potential of your lake? How can you assess the fish population? And once you have this information how do you know what is causing the problems you might find? Unfortunately, these are difficult questions to answer. A good place to start is with your local fish manager. If you are lucky, the DNR will have a recent fisheries population study for your lake. Even if it's not recent, any fisheries data can give you valuable insight into the lake's potential. If there is no data, you can still work with the local fish biologist to assess fish habitat and plan improvements or develop a customized harvest plan to improve the size structure and protect the most valuable spawners.

Of course, people need to realize that even under the best circumstances it takes a long time to change the fish population. Hasz passed along this simple little quiz: If 5 year old bluegill average 8 inches long, how long does it take to grow an 8-inch bluegill? It's not a trick question, but many people become discouraged when they don't see results in a year or two. Just remember, these are small lakes we are dealing with. They may never rival High Falls Flowage but with a little care and self-control, they can offer some quality recreation and an occasional trophy to boot.



## Why Can't the DNR Monitor My Lake?

Everyone would like the DNR to track the fish population in their lake every year. However, few realize that to conduct a full population study the DNR has a very narrow window in which to net and tag fish in the spring. Because of this, the Peshtigo DNR office can only conduct 2 full population studies per year, and they cover all the lakes in Marinette and Oconto Counties. Even the large lakes are on an 8-year rotation for population studies. If you work with the DNR, you might be able to schedule a night of electrofishing where fish are measured and aged. Although this will not get you a population estimate, it can provide valuable information about the size and condition of the fish in your favorite lake. In Marinette County call DNR Fisheries Biologist Justine Hasz at 715-582-5000.



*Old Veteran Lake, located in the Town of Stephenson, is one of our small lakes at 11 acres.*



Area Events Calendar

- Aug 4-7

**Waterfront Festival**  
Great Lakes Memorial Marina, Menominee, MI. Free. Entertainment, food, parade, fireworks, children’s activities. 906-863-2679
- Aug 6

**St. Hubert Shrine Picnic**  
Dun-Good Riders Club. Ride to St. Hubert Shrine leaves from North Country Inn, Dunbar. 715-324-5737
- Aug 6

**Pembine American Legion & Town of Pembine Community Picnic**  
American Legion Park, Pembine. Horse pull, music, beverages, and lunch. 715-324-5237
- Aug 13

**M & M Antique Auto Club Annual Car Show**  
1<sup>st</sup> Menominee, MI, next to band shell. 9am – 5pm. 906-863-3616
- Aug 13

**K & K Rosebush Open Fishing Tournament**  
Rosebush Campsite, 25.5 Road, Stephenson, MI. 8am – 4pm. Menominee River fishing tournament between White Rapids and Chalk Hills Dams. \$5 entry fee. 906-753-4938
- Aug 13

**Silver Cliff Fire & Rescue Annual Fundraising Picnic**  
County Road C and Parkway Road. Parade 10:30am, picnic 11am – 7pm. Games, food, booyah, refreshments, DJ music, face painting. Raffle drawing at 6:30pm. 715-757-2593
- Aug 18

**Harmony Prairie Walk**  
Harmony Arboretum, County Road E. 6:30 – 8:00 pm. Free. Spend an evening in a demonstration prairie. Find out why and how people are restoring prairies today. Learn how to ID prairie plants. 715-732-7784
- Aug 25-28

**Marinette County Fair**  
County Fairgrounds, Wausaukee. Carnival rides, music, commercial vendors, food, fair entries. \$5 daily fee, \$13 season pass. 715-927-7673

Spokes & Folks Bicycle Club

www.spokesandfolks.com

Ride Schedule



- Average Age Ride – August 13

The ride distance will be determined by calculating the average age of participants. (An age will be assigned to riders where none is offered!) By sampling the ages of riders on similar club rides, the distance will be between 40 and 45 miles. An ice cream stop will definitely be included. The ride will be a loop, beginning and ending at Badger Park in Peshtigo. Meet at Badger Park at 10:00 am. For more information, call Laurie Lata at 715-735-5961.
- Luigi’s Ride – August 25

Your choice of a longer, faster ride or a shorter, slower ride to Luigi’s on the east side of Peshtigo. Meet at 5:30 at Paul & Laurie Lata’s. Special menu option by calling the Latas at 715-735-5961. Or just show up and eat off the menu. LIGHTS REQUIRED.
- Laughing Whitefish Falls Mountain Bike Weekend - Sept. 9-11

Accommodations at Laughing Whitefish Lodge in the Munising area of the Upper Peninsula. Options for half-day rides on Friday and Sunday, ride all day on Saturday. Bring your own beverages and a dish to pass for Saturday night. **Reservation deadline is August 15.** Call Jim Shane at 715-732-4240.
- Sunday Morning Breakfast Rides

A club favorite! Bring your family, bring your appetite. Riders will ride to and from breakfast for a social ride great for all levels. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Jim Shane’s house: 2801 Parkridge, Marinette.
- Wednesday Fast Rides

This is a super fast drop ride. Anyone can join, but if you aren’t keeping up, you will be left behind, or dropped. Speeds will be 20 mph and higher. Meet at Cycle Path bike shop in Menominee at 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday Easy-Pedals in Peshtigo

The pace is easy, suitable for children, beginners and recreational riders. Rides are 10 – 15 miles long. Club provides free bike inspections, adjustments, and tips. Meet at Badger Park, Peshtigo, at 6:00 p.m.
- Guests are welcome, helmets are required, and lights are recommended on some rides.

What’s In Season

Home Grown Produce in Marinette County

Sweet Corn

(late July – August)



Jim VandeHei  
715-735-7807  
W2210 Rader Road, Marinette

Hal & Allie Schlag  
715-854-7978  
N6200 Hwy 141, Crivitz

Assorted Produce

(Summer – Fall)

Jandt Brothers  
715-789-2264  
N3439 Jandt Road, Peshtigo  
Open daily

Country Gardens  
715-789-2291  
W4851 Cty D, Peshtigo  
Self-serve stand

Bergeson Vegetable Farm  
715-789-2664  
N3166 Jandt Road, Peshtigo  
Open daily 7a.m – 7pm

Wagner’s  
715-789-2471  
W5604 Hwy 64, Peshtigo  
Open daily

Garlic

(late July – September)

Paul & Vicky Plas  
715-854-2248  
N9129 Just Road, Wausaukee

Organic

Charles & Irene Borkowski  
920-897-3401  
Produce, honey, maple syrup & flowers  
Crivitz Farmers Market – Thursday  
Marinette Farmers Market – Tues. & Fri.



FARMERS’ MARKETS

June – August

**Amberg Flea & Farmers Market**  
Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Amberg Antiques & Sweets, Hwy 141

**Crivitz Flea & Farmers Market**  
Thursday mornings  
Crivitz Village Hall Parking Lot

**Marinette Farmers Market**  
Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings  
starting at 7 a.m., Main Street Market,  
Main & Wells Streets, downtown Marinette

